

The Little Flower

*The Holy Father's Decree Regarding Her Heroic Virtues
(From the "Irish Catholic")*

LESS than a month ago, in proclaiming in this very hall the heroic degree of the virtues of Venerable Fournet, we remarked that France seemed desirous of adding to her titles the new and enviable one of "Mother of Saints."

The echo of Our words has scarcely died away before we herald today another flower, which also flourished on French soil, and are forced to recognize as heroic the virtues of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a professed religious of the Carmel of Lisieux. We are glad that the present decree confirms our recent utterance. We rejoice on account of the honor which will thereby accrue to Catholic France, and the justifiable satisfaction which will be experienced in the diocese which is the fortunate possessor of the garden in which this lovely flower budded, unfolded its petals, and finally reached the full perfection of its development.

To these causes of joy, which spring from the good-will we bear towards the nation of Clovis and St. Louis, is added, moreover, another of a particularly pleasing nature inspired by the special character of the predominant virtue of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

Even those but slightly acquainted with the life of "little Thérèse" will unite their voices to those of the great chorus which acclaims this life as the type of all the virtues of "spiritual childhood." There lies the secret of sanctity, not only for the French, but for all the Faithful scattered over the whole world. We have, therefore, every reason to hope that the example of the new French heroine will be the means of swelling the ranks of perfect Christians not only in her own country, but wherever the children of the Catholic Church are to be found.

That this result may be achieved, it is necessary to understand clearly all that is implied by the term "spiritual childhood." Does it not, therefore, become that very decree, which today exalts a holy member of the Carmelite

Order, whose heroic perfection resulted from the practise of those very virtues which are the outcome of spiritual childhood, to propose to itself, also, as its object, the significance of all that the term "spiritual childhood" is intended to convey? Thus, all will appreciate the excellent reason why Our joy is not limited to that shared with France. Thus, also, all will be better able to realize that there is a call to the faithful of every nation, no matter what may be their age, sex, or state of life, to enter wholeheartedly into the little way which led Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus to the summit of heroic virtue.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD?

The harmony which exists between body and mind renders it possible for the former to furnish a basis for the explanation of the characteristics of spiritual childhood. Observe a child as yet uncertain of its steps, and still without the use of speech. If pursued by another child of its own age, or threatened by a stronger child, or terrified by the unexpected sight of some animal, whither does it run for safety? Where does it seek a refuge? In the arms of its mother. Shielded by her, and clasped to her bosom, all its fears vanish, and with a deep sigh, which a moment before seemed beyond the power of its little lungs, it faces, not only fearlessly but even daringly, the object of its former terror and distress, as though to say, "Now I am certain of defense; full of trust I fling myself into my mother's arms, not only to be safeguarded from all enemy attacks, but to be there, where I can certainly grow strong." In the same way spiritual childhood is the outgrowth of trust in God and complete abandonment to Him.

It will not be out of place to enumerate the qualities of this spiritual childhood, both as regards what it omits and what it includes. It knows nothing of self-pride or the thought of being able to attain by purely natural means a supernatural end, or those spurious notions of self-reliance in the hour of danger and temptation. On the other hand, it presupposes a lively faith in the existence of God, a practical homage to His power and mercy, a confident recourse to the Providence of Him who alone can give us grace to avoid evil and seek good. Thus, whether re-

garded from the negative or the positive point of view, the qualities which comprise spiritual childhood evoke our admiration, and enable us to realize why Our Lord Jesus Christ pointed to it as a necessary condition for obtaining eternal life.

One day Our Lord beckoned from the crowd a little child, and showing him to His disciples, said: "Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted and become as little children you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. xviii, 3). Oh! eloquent lesson directed against the error and ambition of those who look upon the Kingdom of Heaven as an earthly empire, in which they may seek the first places, or soar to the highest dignities. "Who, think you, is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" And in order to impress more deeply upon their minds the fact that pre-eminence in the Kingdom of Heaven will be the prerogative of those who are children in spirit, Our Lord continued: "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he will be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. xviii, 4.) On another occasion some mothers brought to Him their little ones that He might lay His hands on them, and upon their being repulsed by His disciples, Jesus exclaimed indignantly: "Suffer the little ones to come to Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." And He repeated: "Amen, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it." (Mark x, 14, 15.)

It is of great importance to note the force of the language used by Our Divine Lord. The Son of God was not content with merely stating that the Kingdom of Heaven was for children—"Talium est enim regnum coelorum"—or that whosoever should become a little child would be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, but He even went so far as to exclude from His kingdom those who did not become as little children. Now, when a master adopts various methods to inculcate the same lesson, does he not thereby seek to emphasize its value and importance in his sight? If Jesus Christ used so many devices to drive home this lesson to His disciples it is because He wishes by one means or another, to ensure their thorough understanding of it. From this we must conclude

that it was the Divine Master's express desire that His disciples should see in the way of spiritual childhood the path which could lead them to eternal life.

CONFIDENCE AND SELF-SURRENDER

In face of this insistent and forcible teaching of Our Lord it would surely not be possible to find a soul who could hesitate in entering this way of confidence and self-surrender, all the more so, to repeat our own words, because Our Divine Lord not only in a general manner, but also by a concrete example, declared this way of life to be absolutely essential, even in the case of those who have lost the innocence of their childhood. There are some who try to persuade themselves that the way of trust and abandonment to God is the exclusive privilege of those souls whose baptismal robe has remained unsullied by sin. They are unable to reconcile the idea of spiritual childhood with the loss of their innocence. But do not the words of the Divine Master: "Unless ye be converted and become as little children," indicate the necessity of a change, and, consequently, the effort to effect that change: "Unless ye be converted" suggests a transformation which the disciples of Jesus had to undergo in order to become children once again, and who should become a child again if not he who is no longer one? Also, "Unless ye become as little children" indicates the need for exertion, for it is obvious that a man must work to become that which he has never been, or, which he has ceased to be. Since it is impossible for a man never to have been a child, the words, "Unless ye become as children," carry with them the obligation to labor to regain the lost qualities of childhood. It would be absurd to dream of the possibility of resuming either the outward appearance of feebleness of the state of infancy, but there is nothing contrary to reason to discern in the words of the Gospel a counsel given to those who have attained maturity to return to the practise of the virtues associated with spiritual childhood.

In the course of centuries fresh force was given to this teaching by the example of those who attained the perfection of Christian heroism by the practise of these very virtues. Mother Church has ever been ready to bring these

examples before the eyes of her children, in order that they may be better known and the command of the Divine Master more universally obeyed. Today, again, she has but the same end in view when she proclaims the heroic degree of the virtues of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

Although it did not fall to the lot of this blessed Servant of God to spend long years in His service, or to undertake for Him enterprises of great moment, yet, in less than twenty-five years she became rich in merits. One of a Religious Order in which the glory of Doctor may also be the portion of the weaker sex, she was not set apart to pursue any learned studies; nevertheless, her own knowledge was such as to enable her to point out to others the true path to salvation. But where did she reap this copious harvest? Where did she gather such an abundance of ripe fruit? In the garden of spiritual childhood. Whence was derived this vast treasure of knowledge? From the secrets which God reveals to little ones!

MATURITY OF CHARACTER

Though the daughter of Louis Stanislaus Martin, who was born at Alençon on January 2nd, 1873, may have shown at first the thoughtlessness and merry vivacity common to very young children, yet, trustworthy witnesses affirm that the loss she suffered, when five years of age, in the death of her mother, produced in her a seriousness and maturity of mind far in advance of her years. Might it not have been the will of Almighty God to effect in her this sudden transformation; this early determination to adorn her soul with the qualities of spiritual childhood in order that she might in her own person serve as an illustration of the Divine precept:—"Unless ye be converted ...unless ye become as children..."?

Certain it is, that from this time Thérèse, both in her words and deeds furnished proof of an extraordinary maturity of judgment. Worthy of special admiration, moreover, is the readiness with which she ascribed to God all beauty visible in His creatures, and the manner in which she looked to Him alone for help to overcome all the defects she deplored both in her own soul and that

of her neighbor. With what spontaneity did she throw herself into the arms of Almighty God, above all in the hour of suffering and distress! How vividly she brings before our minds the eagerness of a child hastening to the shelter of its mother's arms when it feels its own weakness. Thérèse's recourse to prayer was so frequent, her abandonment to God so thorough that she was able to identify her life on earth with that of the blessed in Heaven.

She loved her parents with a most pure love; but she would have feared to have been the cause of delaying their enjoyment of the happiness of the next world, which she esteemed as immeasurably above any that this world had to offer, were she to have asked for the prolongation of their lives here below.

From all this it would be easy to conclude that with each passing year the virtues of spiritual childhood should take deeper root in the soul of little Thérèse. But the reality far surpassed all expectation, as is clearly proved by her conduct at the most critical period of her life. Her father, a true model of Christian parents, had resigned himself to the loss of the loving ministrations of his youngest daughter, and had even shown the noble pride he felt that all his family should be consecrated to the service of God in the religious state. But Thérèse's maternal uncle thought otherwise. Moreover, the Bishop of the diocese, and the ecclesiastical superior of the Carmel of Lisieux, were not at all disposed to allow her to fulfil the vow made in her childhood of burying herself in the Carmel at fifteen years of age. In vain, however, did they look for any complaint from the lips of Thérèse, either against her uncle, who declared that he would not sanction her entry into Carmel till she had reached the age of seventeen, or against the opposition of the superior, who postponed it till she should have attained her twenty-first year. Oh! how the little dove must have mourned in its impatience to hide itself in the sacred retreat of Carmel! But God alone heard her sighs. Fearing, indeed, that this opposition might even be from Him, she did not venture to gain-say her parents and superiors, who interpreted this silence

as a sign of her acquiescence, a marked proof of her confident trust in God.

CONSTANCY

There was no change in the attitude of Thérèse, even after the failure of her direct and courageous appeal to the Pope. What a useless journey it seemed! What disapproval and probably, even humiliations were hers! Would all these trials have the effect of shaking her resolution, and of making her place the advice of man before what she believed to be the will of God? But, heroic virtue supposes constancy and perseverance. The more she had to endure from the opposition of man, the more she multiplied her acts of confidence in God, and her protestations of abandonment to Him, thus preparing herself to climb to the summit of Christian perfection by the exercise of those virtues characteristic of spiritual childhood. Oh! God did not spare her trials, and she embraced them as the means of detaching herself more and more from the affection of creatures, and of uniting herself more closely to the Spouse of her soul.

When at last the Bishop of the diocese yielded to her repeated entreaties, the fulfilment of her vow was still deferred by the Mother Prioress who delayed her entry into Carmel for four months. Thérèse was then able to act upon the advice given her by Pope Leo XIII, who told her to "do whatever her superior should enjoin in the matter," for among her superiors she placed foremost her Bishop. However, this assiduity in seeking to gain her object, though quite lawful in itself, might nevertheless have given rise to the belief that Thérèse relied upon human means; her confidence, consequently, might have appeared lessened, her abandonment less complete. She preferred to remain silent under this new disappointment, and continued to maintain her peace of mind in the firm belief that God rewards in His own time those who trust in Him.

THÉRESE AND THE CHILD

In fact, Thérèse received her recompense on April 9th, 1888. Through the designs of Providence she was

placed under the patronage of the Child Jesus, who thus showed His pleasure at the manner in which she had already striven to honor the virtues of His Infancy. Let us add, moreover, that this new title served as a fresh incentive to the holy Carmelite to abandon herself more entirely to God. She pictured the Child of Bethlehem in the arms of His most Holy Mother as ever docile, and ready to let Himself be borne from Bethlehem to Egypt, and from Egypt to Nazareth. Thérèse, in her turn, placed herself in the arms of the holy rule of the Carmel, allowing herself to be guided in everything by religious obedience. With the eyes of her soul she saw the Divine Worker of Nazareth, as always fulfilling tasks allotted to Him by His adopted Father, always submissive to those who stood to Him in the place of His Heavenly Father. In imitation of His example. Thérèse diligently carried out the orders of her prioress and novice mistress, and this she did perfectly, without complaint or remark of any nature, as though possessing no will of her own. So brightly did there shine in this young Carmelite the virtues of the Infant Saviour that, if by a dispensation of Providence the title "of the Child Jesus" had not fallen to her lot, her sisters in religion would have bestowed it upon her. When one day the Infant God appeared to her holy Mother of Avila, and on asking her name received from the saintly Reformer of the Carmelites the reply "I am called Teresa of Jesus," she merited to hear this answer "And I, am Jesus of Teresa." In like manner the Carmelite of Lisieux could declare "I am called Thérèse of the *Child Jesus* because the Child Jesus is the Master and Model of Thérèse."

The general esteem in which she was held by the community caused the holy Carmelite to be chosen to help the novice mistress, and this in spite of her youth and the short time which had elapsed since her profession. Surely this was the work of God, who, knowing how brief was to be her existence in this world, willed that in a short time she should accomplish great things. Indeed she made use of this office to grow in virtue, and far from being a source of distraction to her, it served but to perfect her in her way of spiritual childhood. In

spite of the different characters with which she was thus brought in contact, there was never the slightest alteration in the sweet tranquility of her manner, nor did the multiplicity of the demands made upon her ever bring to her lips one word of impatience. In all her doubts she had recourse to the Child Jesus, and from that same Child who, in the workshop of Nazareth "increased in wisdom and in age" (Luke 11.52), she never failed to receive the solution of her difficulties.

Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus persevered faithfully in her little way during the nine and a half years of her religious life. We see, therefore, no need to emphasize further her characteristic virtue, nor to explain how, by the practise of this virtue, she reached the summit of Christian perfection.

TRIUMPH

We will not pain you, dearly beloved Sons, explaining to you that the sanctity of the Servant of God was in no way overshadowed by the predictions made upon her death-bed, or by the advice to spread everywhere the "Story of a Soul" which depicts the interior life of "little Thérèse." Most humble throughout her life-time, she could not, at that supreme moment, give expression to any sentiment, apparently contrary to humility, unless acting directly under Divine inspiration. Man's intelligence is too limited to allow him to understand the motives of the All Powerful when He inspires the utterance or judgments of any of His creatures. One could, however, without temerity read into such instances, the timely means of extending beyond its usual confines the efficacy of good example. Moreover, in the actual case of Sister Thérèse, it is fitting to recognize a special design of God to exalt the merits of spiritual childhood. In the Holy Scriptures we read that by the mouths of children glory is often given to God, "by the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise!" In some cases there is even added the power of circumventing the wiles of the enemy, "that thou mayest destroy the enemy and the avenger" (Ps. VIII 3). Oh! how, then, can we help believing that Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus, by the ex-

ercise of the virtues characteristic of spiritual childhood, has been destined by God to take her place among those who render to God this perfect homage? A glance at the times in which she lived almost enables us to assert that such was her mission:—"that the enemy and avenger might be destroyed." But, without the world-wide circulation of the "Story of a Soul" it would not have been possible for this mission to have been fulfilled.

And now, far from bringing forward any objection, easily refutable, against the sanctity of Thérèse of the Child Jesus, let us recognize the fact that this sanctity was the result of heroic virtues, attained by the persevering and practical love for spiritual childhood.

To the theoretical recognition of this truth should be added the firm resolution to imitate the new heroine. Duplicity and crafty stratagem are, alas, only too characteristic of the present day. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that piety towards God, and charity towards one's neighbor, should so have waned. May all this soon be changed! To the deceits, the fraud, the hypocrisy of the world, may there be opposed the sincerity of a child! With this sincerity, under the guidance of the Carmelite of Lisieux, may there be also cultivated the habit of always walking in the presence of God, and the resolution to let oneself be guided by the hands of His divine Providence!

Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus, shortly before her death, promised to "*spend her Heaven in doing good upon earth.*" We know that she has kept her word, for the favors obtained through her intercession are innumerable. We Ourselves, particularly during the dark days of the recent war, were the recipient of numerous letters from French soldiers and officers, who attributed to Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus their preservation from imminent danger of death. These letters all bore the greater mark of sincerity inasmuch as they frequently told of a "change of life," a pledge of the gratitude towards their Heavenly Benefactress. But it is surely inconceivable that the charity of Thérèse will not still continue to lavish favors on those who have at heart the desire to imitate her as closely as possible.

It is our special desire that the secret of the sanctity of Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus may be disclosed to all our children. And, in order that it may produce in one and all the same admirable results as in Thérèse, we invoke the blessing of God not only on all here present, but on every member of the Christian family.

May the first fruits of this blessing fall upon Catholic France, proud as she well may be today of the new heroine to whom she gave birth!

May a special blessing also rest upon the fortunate diocese of Bayeux and Lisieux, as, by means of the name of Thérèse, it sees its fame spread abroad throughout the world. Through her intercession may there be spared to it for many a year the worthy Bishop, who incites his clergy to sanctity, and has the joy of seeing Christian virtue flourish among the laity!

But where should the roses promised to Thérèse fall more abundantly than on the privileged Carmel in which she realized the most burning desires of her heart? May Heaven's richest blessings be showered upon it, in order that it may ever be the fair garden from which will spring choice flowers of sanctity.

Finally, may the consolations of the Divine blessing never be wanting to those who, at Rome, and elsewhere, are instrumental in promoting the cause of the beatification of the Carmelite of Lisieux. The more the knowledge of this new heroine is spread abroad, the greater will be the number of her imitators, who will give glory to God by the practise of the virtues of spiritual childhood.

The Sin of Birth Control

Pastoral Letter of His Grace Archbishop Hayes.

Dearly Beloved of the Clergy and Laity:

Christmas comes again to bless us with heavenly grace and brighten with eternal hope our journey through this vale of tears. The vale, in many respects, was never gloomier, and the tears seldom less bitter. The world's material progress, rich in power and promise a few years ago, has lamentably failed, in the supreme hour of need, to stand the strain of the terrible affliction of war. We have been groping for the wall, as Isaias the prophet says, —and "like the blind we have groped as if we had no eyes, we have stumbled at noonday as in darkness" (LIX-10). Divine light and strength have been ever at our side; but man would have none of it. Being a law and guide to himself he has been groping in vain for peace and the solution of the world's appalling problems. Though God has visited the children of men with a scourge of their own making, He still loves us with infinite love and would comfort us with an all-forgiving and all-healing compassion.

Over the ashes of war, over the sufferings of mankind, over the distress of nations there appears on the world's horizon, with His exalted Mother and His humble Foster Father, the Divine Child of the ages of prophecy and fulfillment—"the Key of David and the Scepter of the House of Israel; that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; coming to lead out of bondage man sitting in darkness and the shadow of death." Jesus Mary, Joseph bring Bethlehem,—the starry sky and sleeping hills; the shepherds and the sheep; the patient watches and the awing silence of the night; the darkness of the earth and the light of Heaven; the song of the Angels and the star of the Magi; the warm, cheery inn and the forbidding, bleak stable; the ox and the ass; the straw of the manger and the bare, cold ground of the cave; and the gold, frankincense and myrrh from Saba with the dromedaries of Madian and Ephraim.

In the entire panorama of Bethlehem thus unfolded the only thing made by human hand, and not by God, was the

inn that refused a roof to the Child. The stable-cave has been held in blessed honor ever since; the inn in everlasting condemnation. No one knows the site of the inn nor the name of its inhospitable keeper. Still on that heavenly night it was the many who walked the path to the inn for bodily comfort and passing pleasure; only the few, led by Angels and inspired by grace, sought the stable, and beheld the wondrous revelation of Emmanuel. God with us, the Lord of Lords, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of mankind.

There is nothing wrong with God's beautiful world—the universe formed and fashioned by His hand. Only the world of pride, lust and self, created by man and alien to God, has been judged and found wanting both by Heaven and earth. To redeem us from the bondage of sin Our Heavenly Father sends not the plagues of Egypt to afflict us, but His own Beloved Son, the Babe of Bethlehem, "for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be contradicted" (St. Luke II, 34).

On that holy night in Bethlehem a new spiritual and sublime standard of life, thought and action was given to men until the end of time. The Holy Family became the ideal, the law and the copy of childhood, womanhood, parental duty, home-making and the dignity of labor. Innocence of children, purity of woman, chastity of man, poverty, honest toil, humble station, obedience and patience were embraced, sanctified and taught by God Himself as precious and essential for our welfare here and hereafter. Riches, worldly honor, exalted position, great learning, and success,—laudable though they be when sought, reached and used within right reason—all are secondary, unnecessary, and often dangerous, in God's plan, for the following of Christ and the salvation of our immortal souls.

Let us first consider the Child. Christ, the Son of God, coming into the world as a babe has given to human birth a sacredness that compels the Angels to reverence. In Heaven He had His Eternal Father but no mother; on earth He would have a mother but no father in the flesh. The Christ Child did not stay His own entrance

into this mortal life, because His mother was poor, roofless, and without provision for the morrow. He knew that His Heavenly Father, who cared for the lilies of the fields and the birds of the air, loved the children of men more than these. Children troop down from Heaven because God wills it. He alone has the right to stay their coming, while He blesses at will some homes with many, others with but a few or with none at all. They come in the one way ordained by His wisdom. Woe to those who degrade, pervert, or do violence to the law of nature as fixed by the eternal decree of God Himself! Even though some little angels in the flesh, through the moral, mental or physical deformity of parents, may appear to human eyes hideous, misshapen, a blot on civilized society, we must not lose sight of this Christian thought that under and within such visible malformation there lives an immortal soul to be saved and glorified for all eternity among the Blessed in Heaven.

Heinous is the sin committed against the creative act of God, who through the marriage contract invites man and woman to co-operate with Him in the propagation of the human family. To take life after its inception is a horrible crime; but to prevent human life that the Creator is about to bring into being, is satanic. In the first instance, the body is killed, while the soul lives on; in the latter, not only a body but an immortal soul is denied existence in time and in eternity. It has been reserved to our day to see advocated shamelessly the legalizing of such a diabolical thing.

In the name of the Babe of Bethlehem, Whose law you Christian fathers and mothers love and obey, stop your ears to that pagan philosophy, worthy of a Herod, which ignoring revelation and even human wisdom sets itself above the law and the prophets of the Old and the New Dispensation, of which the Christ Child is the beginning, the bond and the end. Keep far from the sanctuary of your Christian homes, as you would an evil spirit, the literature of this unclean abomination. Sin not against children who, after all, are the noblest stimulus and protection to marital affection, fidelity and continency.

The Babe of Bethlehem comes also to restore reverence

for parents—as much needed today as reverence for childhood. If parental authority is fast becoming a byword, it is because parents have failed in their reverence and guidance of childhood according to spiritual standards. Their own children have turned to punish them. God is the supreme sanction of all authority. Neglecting God's law by irreligious or indulgent lives parents have lost, to an alarming degree, their God-given authority over their offspring, who in nursery and school, in sport and society, in literature and art, see, hear, talk of, and, too often, live a freedom of thought and action that knows neither the conventions nor the moral restraint of Christian society. Parents to rule wisely should obey reverently the higher law of God and by example and precept teach their children how elementary in life is the duty to obey authority, Divine and human, domestic and civil. Not the Church alone, but thoughtful men and women, leaders in many spheres of life, are lamenting the deplorable and rebellious spirit of our youth against the restraints of home and family life. It is not within the power of human fear or selfish interest to secure obedience, except it be a servility that cannot be trusted in the building of character. The one lofty motive to inspire the young to reverence and obedience is Christ's own obedience to Mary and Joseph; to them, the creatures of His own hand, the Creator and Lord of the universe was willingly subject in Bethlehem and Nazareth.

Many of humanity's gravest problems would cease to be, if the leadership of Christ, as the Little Child leading, were more fully recognized and followed in the care and training of children and in the upbuilding of the Christian home.

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, in the *Motu proprio* on St. Joseph, sounds a solemn note: "The sanctity of conjugal fidelity and respect for paternal authority have been grievously transgressed by many during the war; the remoteness of one spouse served to relax the bond of duty in the other, and the absence of a watchful eye gave rise to freer and more indulgent conduct, more particularly amongst the younger members of the female sex." Christmas is a Divine call to woman. The Virgin

Mother is placed by God before all womanhood as an example of purity, devotion, and duty. Her whole being is consecrated to the exalted office of motherhood. Christ not only would be a child, but He would have a mother—and an immaculate one, that man might know the mind of God with regard to woman's place in the world. Providence ordained that God's own Mother, deprived of wealth, fame and social prestige, should have no distractions in her motherhood, except the temple and the home. The sublime simplicity of woman's mission seems no longer fashionable. The eternal commonplaces of building the home by rocking the cradle, spinning the wheel, preparing the meal, making the fireside cheery, teaching the children to pray reverently and live justly are more vital to the permanent good of society and the nation than the wisest legislation conceivable to offset the dangers lying in woman's new freedom and uncertain adventure that may leave in their wake empty cradles and homeless communities.

Another Christian lesson the world needs to learn is God's law against divorce. The Gospel tells of Mary's severe trial when "Joseph, her husband, being a just man, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep" (Matt. I-19-20) and prevented him doing so. Divorce has become a national curse; and the evil is spreading. Verily it is a deadly disease in our body politic, not to speak of the moral and spiritual harm born of broken homes, broken hearts, seared souls, abandoned children and unholy alliances.

Disastrous beyond possibility of description to society is the condition when women measure their lives, not by the number of their offspring but by the number of their husbands. Pagan Rome, at the height of its imperial power, with a conquered world paying tribute to the Caesars, sealed slowly but surely its own doom. No foe without proved as terrible an enemy as corruption within. Widespread divorce desecrated the sanctuary of the family with the consequent degradation of woman. The constructive forces of the empire were weakened by the deadly moral poisons that Roman society absorbed into its very

vitals and took no means to throw off. When this happens in the human body, death follows.

Let us thank our Heavenly Father for the valiant women we all know—and their name is legion—who with the highest ideals of wifehood and motherhood carry on heroically the honor of the family. Neither height nor depth, nor sorrow nor pain, nor sin of husband nor ingratitude of children, nor privation nor loss, nor opportunity of comfort nor lure of pleasure can tempt such noble women to shirk their duty or break up their home. Silently, patiently, cheerfully and holily they spend themselves and are spent for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their own flesh and blood in their children. Mary, the Mother of Christ, strengthens with the grace and fortitude of Heaven such wonderful mothers, who are one of the most sacred benedictions on this earth.

Since Our Saviour, the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father, deigned to be called the "Son of the Carpenter," and since Mary, the Mother of Christ, rejoiced to be known as the "Spouse of the Carpenter," we may readily understand the dignity of the person and office of Joseph in the Holy Family. God evidently would teach through St. Joseph that the supreme dignity of man rests not on a temporal or human foundation but essentially on our relation to Christ, the God-Man. The Incarnation elevated human nature to the supernatural order, in which man must live, move and have his being, if our human nature is to reach its highest and noblest expression and purpose in conformity with the Divine Will.

St. Joseph, a poor and obscure workingman in the eyes of the world, was raised in the sight of God and the Angels, to a dignity with which none of earthly origin can be compared. Yet Joseph was nothing more than the faithful head of the Holy Family, neither prophet nor priest, nor apostle nor teacher. Nor did he present the heroic figures of Joseph of old in Egypt, or of David, the Shepherd King of Israel. By the labor of his hands, he cared in poverty for Jesus and Mary. He led them amid most harassing circumstances to Bethlehem, Nazareth and across the sands of the desert to Egypt and back. The humble home and little family were his uni-

verse of love and service. In comparison with the Babe and the Mother, through whom God manifested His infinite love and mercy, the imperial glory of the Caesars, the jewelled palace of Herod, the gorgeous gardens of the Pharaohs and the undying fame symbolized by the Pyramids were but dead sea fruit to Joseph's mind. His example fixes the real values of human life. Father and husband, ruler and subject, employer and employee, rich and poor—all should pattern their lives and perform their duties in the spirit of this "just man." This justice means reverence for religion; obedience to lawful authority; fair dealing on the part of capital; honest work on the part of labor; purification of wealth; sanctification of poverty.

This Christmas pastoral I place most humbly in the hands of St. Joseph, whom the clergy, the religious and the faithful are honoring in our churches and chapels this day, at the very hour I am writing the final words of this message to my beloved children in Christ.

Praying the Infant Saviour to bless most abundantly with every Christmas grace the entire flock, I am,

Faithfully your Shepherd,

PATRICK JOSEPH.

Archbishop of New York.

In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the
Proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the
Universal Church.

December 14, 1921.

Keeping Our Children Catholics

RT. REV. MGR. JOHN A. SHEPPARD, V.G.

LET me give you a few figures on immigration and then you will have an idea of how you can be of service in assisting your clergy so that we may have no leakage through your carelessness.

Between 1820 and 1920, thirty millions landed here; one-half of these thirty millions came within the last thirty years. First came the Germans and people from central Europe during the political revolution; they came and made this country their home. In the year 1848 started the great Irish influx; in the fifties one-half of the total immigration was Irish, and today there are many more Irish here than in the whole of Ireland. They, too, came to stay, and they have had more influence on the national character than any other race.

Later, immigration came for economic reasons, and to-day in the city of New York we have about 700,000 Italians, while in Jersey City we have about thirty-five and in Newark at least sixty thousand. At present there are more Jews in New York City than in Jerusalem; more Poles in Chicago than in Warsaw; more Italians in New York City than in Rome. In 1915 the most densely populated spot in the world was in New York City somewhere between Thirty-fourth and Fifty-ninth streets, around Tenth and Eleventh avenues, where there were 11,000 persons to the acre. It is possible that today the densest spot on earth, excluding China and India, is either the Jewish colony at Rivington, Forsyth and Eldridge Streets, or the Italian colony at Mulberry Bend. In this district, bounded by Worth, Lafayette, Hudson Streets and the Bowery, there are about 110,000 people of Italian extraction. The present immigration is composed mainly of Catholics and Jews. The Catholics include Poles, Russians, Bohemians, Croats, Slavonians, Slovaks, Dalmatians, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Armenians, Maronites, Chaldeans, Syrians and Rumanians. Now, to keep them in the Church is an enormous work. The Slavs and Italians are our people, and therefore we are to give them special attention to have them remain our people; hence

I say, if they are to be Americanized, leave them to us and do not teach them to rebel against God and His holy religion, or you will teach them by inference to rebel against the country.

The Church, therefore, looks to you Catholic men to assist her, and she has never looked in vain for the assistance of her children. Therefore, she says to you: "Have every one of these Catholic men of foreign tongue in the Holy Name Society, so that they may testify to the Faith in which they were reared, if you wish to be instrumental in making them good Americans."

During the past year you have begun the good work of gathering these people into your ranks, and I want to compliment you most strongly for what you have done, and I only put these figures before you so that you may go on with renewed zeal and prosper the good work which you have so earnestly begun.

Another task I would set before you which is a problem for the Church, make it your slogan that every Catholic child should find a place in a Catholic school. When these people are well in hand by the clergy of the United States, they, too, will build their own schools as we have done and the generation to come will be under that education which does not divorce itself from religion, but which will make them thoroughly Catholic and conscientious citizens of this great commonwealth.